

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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ATHENS FOR RTDO KINNEAR

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: BTRA BBSR LE
SUBJ: ARAB-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PROPOSES OFFICE IN
BEIRUT: BOYCOTT MATTERS

1. SUMMARY: ARAB-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (AACC)
SELECTS BEIRUT AS SITE OF ITS PERMANENT MID-EAST OFFICE.
BEIRUT COIC PRESIDENT KASSAR INFORMS AMBASSADOR THAT RECENT
VISIT OF ARAB COC DELEGATES TO U.S. WENT SUCCESSFULLY. END
SUMMARY.

2. LOCAL PRESS CARRIED ANNOUNCEMENT APRIL 27 BY PRESIDENT
OF BEIRUT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (COIC) ADNAN
KASSAR THAT "DESPITE EVENTS OF 1975-76 THE ARAB-
AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HAS CHOSEN BEIRUT FOR
ESTABLISHMENT OF ITS PERMANENT SEAT IN THE MIDDLE EAST."
KASSAR UNDERLINED FACT THAT DECISION, WHICH HE SAID WAS
TAKEN AFTER AYN AR-RUMMANEH/SHIAH INCIDENTS OF APRIL 9-12
AND RESIGNATION OF HOSS GOVERNMENT, CONSTITUTED "NEW
PROOF OF THE IRREPLACEABLE CHARACTER OF OUR CAPITAL
CITY." THE NEW OFFICE, ACCORDING TO KASSAR, WOULD
FACILITATE THE ACTIVITIES OF AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN IN
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3. IN CALL ON AMBASSADOR MAY 2, KASSAR OFFERED
FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS:

--ON AACC REGIONAL OFFICE: DECISION WAS TAKEN
IN PRINCIPLE, WITH FINANCING AND STAFF YET TO BE WORKED

OUT. KASSAR IN NEW YORK HAD SUGGESTED FINANCING OFFICE THROUGH EQUAL ONE-THIRD SUBSCRIPTIONS FROM AACC NEW YORK, FEDERATION OF ARAB CHAMBERS AS A WHOLE, AND BEIRUT COIC. OFFICE WOULD RELY MAINLY ON EXISTING FEDERATION HQ STAFF IN BEIRUT OR ON COIC STAFF AND COULD BE SITUATED IN EITHER OF THEIR BUILDINGS.

--ON DELEGATION VISIT TO U.S.: AACC ORGANIZATION WAS EXCELLENT AND DELEGATION OF 85 MANAGED OPERATE IN HARMONY. DELEGATES WISHING TO ASSUME PROVOCATIVE STANDPOINTS HAD BEEN SUBDUED BY MORE SOBER HEADS. VISITORS HAD RECEIVED EXCELLENT IMPRESSION WHEN HIGH-LEVEL U.S. INTERLOCUTORS STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF PRE-SERVING U.S.-ARAB TRADE RELATIONS BY FINDING ACCOMMODATION BETWEEN EQUALLY SOVEREIGN RIGHTS OF ARAB STATES AND OF U.S. RE BOYCOTT ISSUE. KASSAR THOUGHT DELEGATION AS A WHOLE HAD BEEN ENCOURAGED BY WHAT IT HAD HEARD TO ADOPT COOPERATIVE RATHER THAN CONFRONTATIONAL APPROACH TO PROBLEM, AND EXPRESSED HIS EXPECTATION THAT MODUS VIVENDI COULD BE FOUND WHERE U.S.-LEBANESE TRADE CONCERNED.

DECONTROL 6/30/1980.
PARKER

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